

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Temple B'Nai Israel
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 401 West Grand Street N/A ☐ not for publication
city or town Jackson NA ☐ vicinity
stat Tennessee code TN county Madison code 113 zip code 38301
e _____

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date
State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet

- ☐ determined eligible for the
National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet

- ☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register

- ☐ removed from the National
Register.

- ☐ other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Temple B'Nai Israel
Name of Property

Madison County, TN
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in count)

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1 | 0 | buildings |
| 1 | 0 | sites |
| 0 | 0 | structures |
| 0 | 0 | objects |
| 2 | 0 | Total |

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion-Religious Facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion-Religious Facility
Religion-Church School

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Romanesque Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Brick

roof Other-Tar, Clay Tile
other Glass; Stone

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☒ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Social History

Period of Significance

1941-1958

Significant Dates

1941

Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering
Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☐ Federal Agency
- ☐ Local Government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Temple B'Nai Israel
Name of Property

Madison County, TN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1 acre Jackson North 438NE

UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 16 334789 3943951
Zone Easting Northing
2 _____

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing
4 _____
☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Boundary Justification

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Renee Tavares/Historic Preservation Planner, Dr. Pam Dennis/Library Director
organization SWTDD, Lambuth University date July 28, 2008
street & number 27 Conrad Drive, Suite 150; 705 Lambuth telephone 731-668-6420, 425-3290
Boulevard
city or town Jackson state TN zip code 38305, 38301

Additional Documentation

submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 Or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO) or FPO for any additional items

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Congregation of Temple B'Nai Israel - c/o Mike Silver, President
street & number 401 West Grand Street telephone (731) 427-6141
city or town Jackson state TN zip code 38301

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Temple B'Nai Israel
Madison County, Tennessee

Narrative Description

The Temple B'Nai Israel is located on a small city lot on the northwest corner of Campbell and West Grand streets in Jackson (population 59,643), Madison County, Tennessee. Built in 1941, the Romanesque influenced temple is composed of shades of tan brick set in a running bond, rests on a continuous concrete foundation, and has a flat tar roof. The building is one story with a choir loft and basement. Limestone coping and decorative geometric brickwork on the façade delineate the large segmental arch with its flanking towers. One story tri-part arches lead to the entry doors. In 1962, a one-story extension was built on the west elevation, set back from the façade. Inside, stained glass windows, original lights, and original wood pews are character-defining features. The building retains a high degree of integrity.

The building is located in the Lambuth residential neighborhood, which is about sixteen city blocks by nineteen city blocks. The Lambuth neighborhood includes an elementary school, middle school, fire station, various buildings associated with the hospital, and several Christian denomination churches. The boundaries of the neighborhood run from the northwest corner of Main Street and Highland Avenue and run west to Hollywood, going northwest on Hollywood to Forest Avenue, going east to Highland Avenue, back to the corner of Main Street and Highland Avenue. This neighborhood is mainly comprised of bungalows, foursquares, and Victorian era homes on varying lot sizes of a quarter acre to two acres. Lambuth University is also located in this neighborhood as is "Campbell Lake" a rather large pond and both the Hollywood Cemetery (NR 5/22/03) and B'Nai Israel Cemetery, the latter owned by the Congregation of Temple B'Nai Israel.



Lambuth Area Neighborhood

Situated on a slightly inclined corner lot and facing Grand Avenue, Temple B'Nai Israel is approached by historic concrete stairs comprised of seven risers and treads. Decorative historic metal balustrades flank the stairs and end at metal lampposts. The flat walkway increases in width to a semi-circle and leads to a second set of stairs to the recessed portico. The second set of stairs is split into three equal parts with two decorative railings. Going to the west of the semi-circular entrance is a modern walkway that leads to the 1962 addition. The walks, balustrades, and lampposts are considered part of the historic setting, a contributing site.

The south façade, not including the 1962 west wing addition, has a continuous concrete foundation that leads to a running brick course. The west and east towers extend out from the center recessed portico. The west and east towers are identical in design, except the east tower contains the cornerstone for the building (about fifteen courses up.) Each tower has a blind arch composed of a limestone sill, thirty-eight course header bond infill, circular stained glass window, and a segmental arch of three courses of corbelled rowlock bricks. Each stained glass window contains a Star of David. The running brick course continues to a limestone coping. Above this is a slightly recessed tier embellished with a diapering weave of tan accent brick capped with limestone coping. All other elevations of the original building have this decorative brickwork at the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

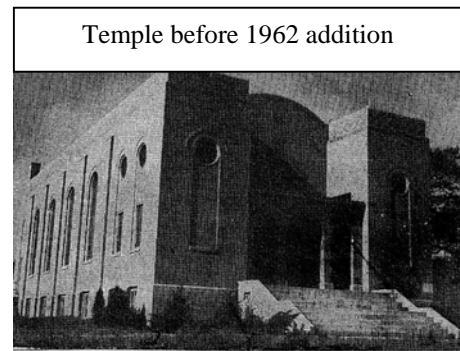
Temple B'Nai Israel
Madison County, Tennessee

roofline. The limestone coping extends to the segmental arch between the towers. Instead of the diapering pattern brick below the coping, there is a course of soldier bricks. A limestone Star of David has a prominent place in the center of the arch and above a semicircular stained glass window. The window is capped by three courses of corbelled brick with a geometric design of soldier bricks.

The main entry to the temple (south façade) is through a tri-part portico set between the towers. The central arch is slightly taller than the flanking arches. All of the arches are surmounted by three course of rowlock bricks. The brick "columns" of the arches are embellished with two shades of tan brick set in a pattern to resemble quoins. Below the taller arch, entry to the temple is through a large double leaf wood door. Each leaf has three symmetrically placed carved circles separated by carved triangles so that it appears that the circle is set in a square. The thumb piece door handle is metal, with the handle having a twisted design. On either side of the entrance doors are stained glass windows with the Star of David at the top.

The south façade also contains the wing addition built in 1962. The wing is set back from the main building and incorporates stylistic elements of the original building. The brick course is running bond brick as on the original building. Three steps lead to the entrance door, which is slightly below grade, and is a vertical board door with a small window at the top three-quarter part of the door. There is also a plain thumb piece door handle. As on the original building, there is limestone coping with diapering weave brick above it and more limestone coping above the brick. Towards the west side of the south façade of the addition is a large hopper window.

The west elevation is composed of the 1962 wing and the 1941 building. Five brick pilasters topped with limestone delineate the west elevation of the 1941 building. Four large stained glass windows and a blind arch with header brick course are set between the pilasters. Similar in size to the blind arches on the façade, the elevation windows are capped by segmental arches composed of corbelled rowlock bricks and they rest on limestone sills. The southern part of this elevation contains two circular stained glass windows capped by corbelled brick segmental arches. The windows have the Star of David in them. There is a brick panel below each of these windows and below the brickwork another stained glass window.



Picture Courtesy: Lambuth University - B'Nai Israel Center for Jewish Studies. Synagogue - pre 1960 addition

The southern part of the 1962 addition on the west elevation has three windows similar to the one on the south façade of the addition. The decorative brickwork found on the 1962 addition continues to the west elevation. There are modern down spouts located to the north of the southern and northern most windows. North of the windows is a stair leading to the classrooms set partially below grade. The wood and glass paneled door contains nine lights covered with a security grate and four panels. North of the entrance door the building has a slight projection that contains interior stairs and a library, and also two more hopper windows, the northern most with a window air conditioning unit. Down spouts are located on either side of the windows.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 3Temple B'Nai Israel
Madison County, Tennessee

The north elevation (rear) reveals the main building and the wing. The western and eastern edges of the main building are blind arches. They consist of a limestone sill with a hopper window above the sill and twenty-eight-header brick course work. The arch is composed of three courses of corbelled rowlock bricks. Although the rear of the temple is simpler in design than the façade, there is still attention to details. Set between the two blind arches are two smaller segmental arch stained glass windows and two smaller segmental arch blind arches. Two courses of rowlock bricks delineate the windows and arches. Below each arched window are six- and eight- light basement windows. On the outside of each stained glass window is a modern gutter running from the top to the bottom. The two inside windows are in-filled with eighteen-header brick course with concrete sills. An air vent is situated above the blind arches. There are two modern air conditioning units on the east side of the north façade. The 1962 wing is recessed from the main building and has the continuous running bond course with a metal door entrance at the west end. The running bond continues to the coping to a second recessed tier with diapering weave to the top limestone coping.

The east elevation is similar to the west elevation. Four brick pilasters delineate the fenestration. The southern window/blind arch is like those seen on the façade towers. North of this opening, there is a window/blind arch like that found on the north elevation. The southernmost opening on the east elevation also repeats this pattern. Finally, the large stained glass windows are patterned like those on the west. As on the other elevations, six- and eight-light basement windows are located below the arched windows.



Original Ark,
now at
Lambuth

The temple is entered through the double doors on the south façade. Inside is an enclosed foyer with carpeting and plaster walls. Plaster walls are found throughout the synagogue. The west part of the foyer contains the Rabbi's office, refurbished in 1962, and the east part contains a carpeted, three-run open well stairs with wood balusters and handrail leading to the basement and the choir loft. North of the foyer, leading into the sanctuary, is a second set of original wood doors. The doors have circular windows at the top quarter. The temple sanctuary contains three aisles of wood pews; east and west aisles have eleven rows and the central aisle contains nine rows. The Cumberland Presbyterian congregation donated the pews to the B'Nai Israel congregation in 1897. (The pews are pre-1897.) Floors are wood and covered with carpeting in the aisles. Three segmental arch stairs lead to the pulpit and the Ark north of the pulpit. A door leads to a small room on the east end of the stairs and the west end the door leads to a single flight stairway that goes to the basement level only. Situated behind a large segmental arch, the three Torah scrolls are placed on the bimah, the pedestal on which the Torah scrolls are placed when they are being read in the synagogue. The Ark, which holds the Torahs when they are not in use, is located north of the bimah.¹ On either side of the Ark are two stained glass windows. The original Ark is now located at the Lambuth-B'Nai Israel Center for Jewish Studies. When renovations were made in 1962, the new Ark was built. The Ark is simple in design and made of wood. The Ark has an inset round arch; the top quarter of the arch has raised Hebrew words stating the beginning of the Ten Commandments. The lower half of the arch has inset stained glass windows, also with Hebrew words. The two handles open the pocket doors to reveal three Torah scrolls. Above the Ark is the eternal flame in a red hurricane glass with a brass stand and the Star of David on the bottom. The stand is held up with three brass chain links to the

¹ Tracey Rich. *Judiasm 101*, <http://www.jewfaq.org/index.htm> (accessed 14 September 2007).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Temple B'Nai Israel
Madison County, Tennessee

ceiling. In the Five Books of Moses, Exodus, chapter 27, verses 20 and 21, tells about the commandment to keep a light burning in the Tabernacle outside of the Ark of the Covenant.

There are eight stained glass windows along the walls in the sanctuary. Each stained glass window contains symbols of Judaism. The southern most stained glass window on the west side represents the Shavu'ot, the Festival of Weeks, which portrays the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, and is also known as Hag Matan Torateinu. The next stained glass window comes from the Book of Leviticus where the Ark is being carried. The next window portrays the first section of Genesis and the creation of the world. The northernmost window on the west side has the representation of Chanukah.² On the east side, the southernmost window depicts the symbols of the Shabbat. The symbols of the Shabbat include two Shabbat candles representing two commandments, which are separate from the original Ten Commandments: zakhor (remember) and shamor (observe), Challah (bread) which is prayed over at the Shabbat, and wine where a Kaddish prayer is used to sanctify the Shabbat. The next window to the north has multiple representations. The lions represent the Tribe of Judah; the four cups signify tradition; and there is a representation of the Passover plate. The next window north has the representation of the Magen David (Star of David, Shield of David). The final window on the east side has two symbols representing the New Year - the horns and the scale and balance.

The stairs on the east (entering the building by the Rabbi's office) lead to two different levels. Going up the carpeted, original three-run open well stairs have a wood balustrade and handrail. The top of the stairs leads to the choir loft that overlooks the sanctuary. The floors in the choir loft have exposed wood and there are two aisles of wood pews with two rows in each aisle. Going toward the west end of the choir loft is a room that holds a piano. Details of the historic lights are visible at this level. The lights are suspended from brass chains, composed of white glass, and have the Star of David on the bottom.

The carpeted stairway leading to the basement is an original three-run open well stairway with a wood balustrade and handrail. The stairs end in a foyer that contains both the women's and men's restrooms. Going west leads to an enclosed kitchen. North of the foyer is the social hall which is used by other religious groups for their services. The social hall contains five wood pews and a lectern area and is carpeted. The basement contains plaster walls, wood trim and pews, linoleum tile in the kitchen, and fixtures one would find in a kitchen. Hunger Hearts Mission and Unity Baptist Church have used the social hall as their place of worship for the past fifteen years.

In 1962, a wing was added to the building. The addition is entered either from the west end of the social hall or the stairs in the sanctuary. The addition contains classrooms and a library. When passing the doorway into the addition, heading south are three classrooms. The library is on the northwest end of the building addition. The library facing north leads to stairs that lead to the northwest corner of the sanctuary near the

² Chanukah is not one of the High Holy Days of Judaism, but is about the reign of Alexander the Great and his conquests of multiple lands. Alexander the Great allowed the people under his control to observe their religions. Later Antiochus the Fourth took control and oppressed the Jewish people. This oppression led to a successful revolt. When the rededication of the Temple occurred, there was oil left to burn the candelabrum for one day, yet it burned for eight days. This led to the eight-day festival, which commemorates this miracle.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

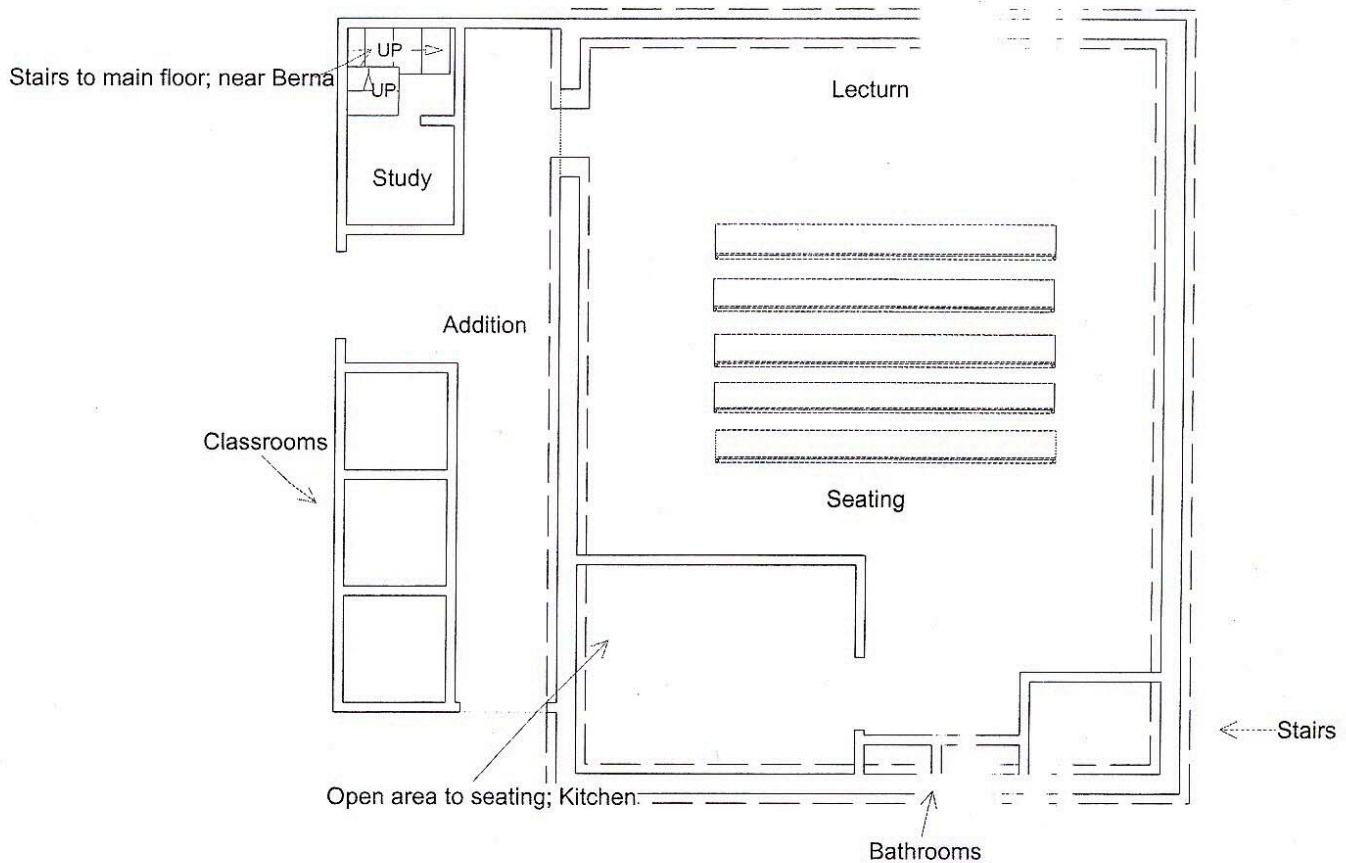
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

Temple B'Nai Israel
Madison County, Tennessee

pulpit on the main floor. The addition contains plaster walls, wood trim, and carpeting and fixtures one would find in a normal classroom setting, such as chalkboards, bookshelves, tables, etc.

Basement, main floor, and choir loft plans. Not to scale.



BASEMENT FLOORPLAN

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 6

Temple B'Nai Israel
Madison County, Tennessee



United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 7Temple B'Nai Israel
Madison County, Tennessee

Statement of Significance

Temple B'Nai Israel is being nominated to the National Register under criteria A and C for its local significance in architecture and social history. The congregation started in 1885 and held services in various places, including homes of congregation members, until growth in the Jewish community allowed for the purchase of a place of worship, then the continued growth and prosperity led to the construction of this 1941 Temple. Architecturally the building is a fine example of Romanesque Revival influenced design in Jackson, Tennessee. Character defining features of the masonry building include the arched entry, articulated walls with arched window openings, and towers. One of the more unique components of the building are the original stained glass windows which were designed by an artist that subsequently went to work with Laukhuff Glass of Memphis. The temple is a good representation of how this Jewish congregation in Jackson worked within the larger community. Temple B'Nai Israel retains its architectural integrity.

Jewish immigration to the US is thought to have started in 1654, when twenty-three Jews from Recife, Brazil seeking refuge from the Inquisition landed at New Amsterdam, now known as New York City. Jewish immigration came to the United States in three different waves. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Sephardic Jews came to the United States because of religious and political freedoms. Around 1830-1870, Jews from the Germanic states and the Austro-Hungarian Empire came to the United States due to crop failure in Europe. The third wave of immigration in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries consisted primarily of political and religious refugees from Eastern Europe.³ The first known Jew in Jackson, Tennessee was J. Friedlob in 1867. He was arranging for the transportation of goods from

Memphis, Tennessee to Estanaula, Tennessee and settled in Jackson. (Estanaula, was located along the Madison/Haywood county line off the shores of the Hatchie River.) Sometime after Friedlob, the Jewish families who lived in Jackson included the Baums, Tuchfelds, Woerners, Myers, Levys, among others. Records from the Jackson Jewish Cemetery and the Madison County Courthouse show that the Jewish community was growing. Though the temple has few records, researchers have gone through different records sources to show the growth of Jewish population in Jackson, Tennessee. In 1860 there were twenty-five names pulled from the census as possible Jewish citizens. By 1872, there were twenty-one Jewish merchants listed in the city directory and eighty-five individuals listed in the city directory. With the growth, the Jewish community realized the need to charter a congregation in Jackson. J. Friedlob, Victor Woerner, Harry Myers, Nathan Baum, J. Samuels, M. Tuchfeld, and Sam Baum, Sr. applied for the Charter, which was granted to the Hebrew Congregation B'Nai Israel, later known as Congregation B'Nai Israel, by the State of Tennessee on May 14, 1885.⁴



Picture Courtesy: Lambuth
University B'Nai Israel Center for
Jewish Studies
Synagogue, c1897-1941.

Cumberland Presbyterian Church
converted to Temple B'Nai Israel.

³ Pam Dennis, *History of Jewish Communities in West Tennessee* (Jackson, TN: West Tennessee Historical Society), 3.

⁴ Congregation B'nai Israel. *The Temple History*, <<http://www.congregationbnaiisrael.org/aboutus/history/>> (Accessed 5 September 2007).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 8Temple B'Nai Israel
Madison County, Tennessee

Between 1867 and 1897, services were held at various locations in Jackson, including the Odd Fellows building, Tuchfeld Store (100 Market Street), and houses located on West Deaderick, and 180 Highland. On June 19, 1897, the congregation traded a lot on North Cumberland (previously purchased) along with \$600.00 to the Cumberland Presbyterian Congregation for their place of worship. Temple B'Nai Israel converted the church for use as a temple and held services here until 1941. Under the leadership of congregation president J.L. Rosenbloom a building fund was started at a congregation meeting on January 24, 1925. Sam Baum, an officer of the Board of Trustees, recommended that a new temple be built. Mr. Tuchfeld motioned "That the financial secretary in conjunction with the Board of Trustees be directed to look out for a suitable building site with a view to purchase it for this purpose."⁵ By 1941 a suitable site was located at the corner of Grand and Campbell. As a Reform congregation, the temple did not need to be located close to its members, who could drive to the temple on Sabbath. In the years prior to the construction of the temple in 1941 the congregation had grown from 55 to 155 members and the funds needed to construct the new building were raised⁶

On August 24, 1941 the cornerstone was laid for the new temple. Rabbi Dr. Maurice Feuer conducted the ceremony on this day. Congregation President A.S. Lindy was unable to be present for the ceremonies, but he telegraphed a special message that was read on his behalf. The blessing used for the ceremony was from the Book of Chronicles in reference to the building of Solomon's Temple. A metal box was placed behind the cornerstone. It included a list of membership, two manuscripts written by J. L. Rosenbloom, Sr., copy of the current B'Nai B'Rith magazine, and the *Jackson Sun*, August 24th, 1941 edition.

On Sunday, September 21, 1941 at the New Years Eve Holy Day services, Rosh Hashanah, the temple was finished. Credit was given to A.S. Lindy and the building committee consisting of Sam Rosenbloom, Jonas Kisber, M. Schulman, Sam Wahl, and Louis Atfeld for getting the building up in time for Rosh Hashanah. The temple continues to be used as the place of worship for the B'Nai Israel congregation.

As the only temple in a large residential area of Jackson that contains several churches, Temple B'Nai Israel's imposing presence symbolizes the importance of the small but active Jewish community in Jackson and West Tennessee. Unlike Orthodox congregations where the temple needed to be built close to the congregants, the Reform Temple B'Nai Israel's members were scattered throughout the city. In contrast, the 1950s Baron Hirsch temple in Memphis (Vollintine Hills Historic District NR 7/11/08) was built in the east part of Memphis as part of a neighborhood where temple members would live.

Members of Temple B'Nai Israel have worked or volunteered in the commercial, educational, and civic life of Jackson. They have served as aldermen, served on and led the Chamber of Commerce, and been prominent in the field of education. Temple B'Nai Israel continues to reach out and work with the wider

⁵ *Minutes*, Congregation Meeting. January 24, 1925.

⁶ Dennis, Pam PhD, Exhibit for the General Assembly of United Jewish Communities.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 9Temple B'Nai Israel
Madison County, Tennessee

Christian community in Jackson. The temple and Lambuth University, which is affiliated with the United Methodist Church, have established the Lambuth - B'Nai Israel Center for Jewish Studies.

Temple B'Nai Israel is a fine example of the Romanesque Revival style in Jackson. According to one source, eleventh century Romanesque design in Western Europe retained elements of earlier Roman and Byzantine styles and was characterized by heavy articulated masonry walls, vaults, and round arches.⁷ The style was popular until the advent of the Gothic style in the twelfth century. By the late 1800s, the revival style was popular in the United States. The Romanesque Revival relied heavily on masonry construction and round arch openings or round arch details when there were no openings.⁸ Temple B'Nai Israel is a late example of this style. It features the masonry construction and use of arches throughout the building. While not as detailed as high style or academic examples of Romanesque Revival, the temple is embellished with stained glass windows and decorative brickwork. An artist who subsequently went to work for Laukhuff Glass designed the windows. Laukhuff Glass has taken care of maintenance and restoration of the windows since 1950. Just like other religious institutions, the windows hold icons and stories that are part of Judaism: Torah, the Five Books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

There are no other buildings in Jackson that have similar styling. The Temple Israel, built in 1915, in Memphis is similar in form and details to the Temple B'Nai Israel but more elaborate, with more Neo-Byzantine or Byzantine Revival elements.⁹ It is not known if other early to mid-twentieth century temples in the state were designed in this revival style. Though there are architectural revival styles within commercial, civic, and religious buildings in Jackson, there are none that express the style of the Temple B'Nai Israel. Temple Adas Israel (circa 1881, remodeled circa 1920) in Brownsville, Haywood County, was listed in the National Register in 1979. Unlike Temple B'Nai Israel, the Brownsville Temple was built in a style that many churches had, the Gothic Revival. According to the nomination "Except for the use of Judaic religious symbols in the ornamentation and fenestration, it could easily be mistaken for the smaller Christian churches in the area."¹⁰

⁷ Cyril Harris, *Illustrated Dictionary of Historic Architecture* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1977) 461.

⁸ Francis D.K. Ching, *A Visual Dictionary of Architecture* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1997), 131; Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1790* (Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press, 1969), 61.

⁹ Phil Thomason, "Historical and Architectural Survey Proposed I-40/I-240 Midtown Interchange, Memphis, Shelby County, Tennessee," (Nashville: Tennessee Department of Transportation, 1989) 188.

¹⁰ "Temple Adas Israel" National Register nomination. Barbara Hume Church and Robert E. Dalton, Tennessee Historical Commission, 1978.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

Temple B'Nai Israel
Madison County, Tennessee

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 11

Temple B'Nai Israel
Madison County, Tennessee

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 12

Temple B'Nai Israel
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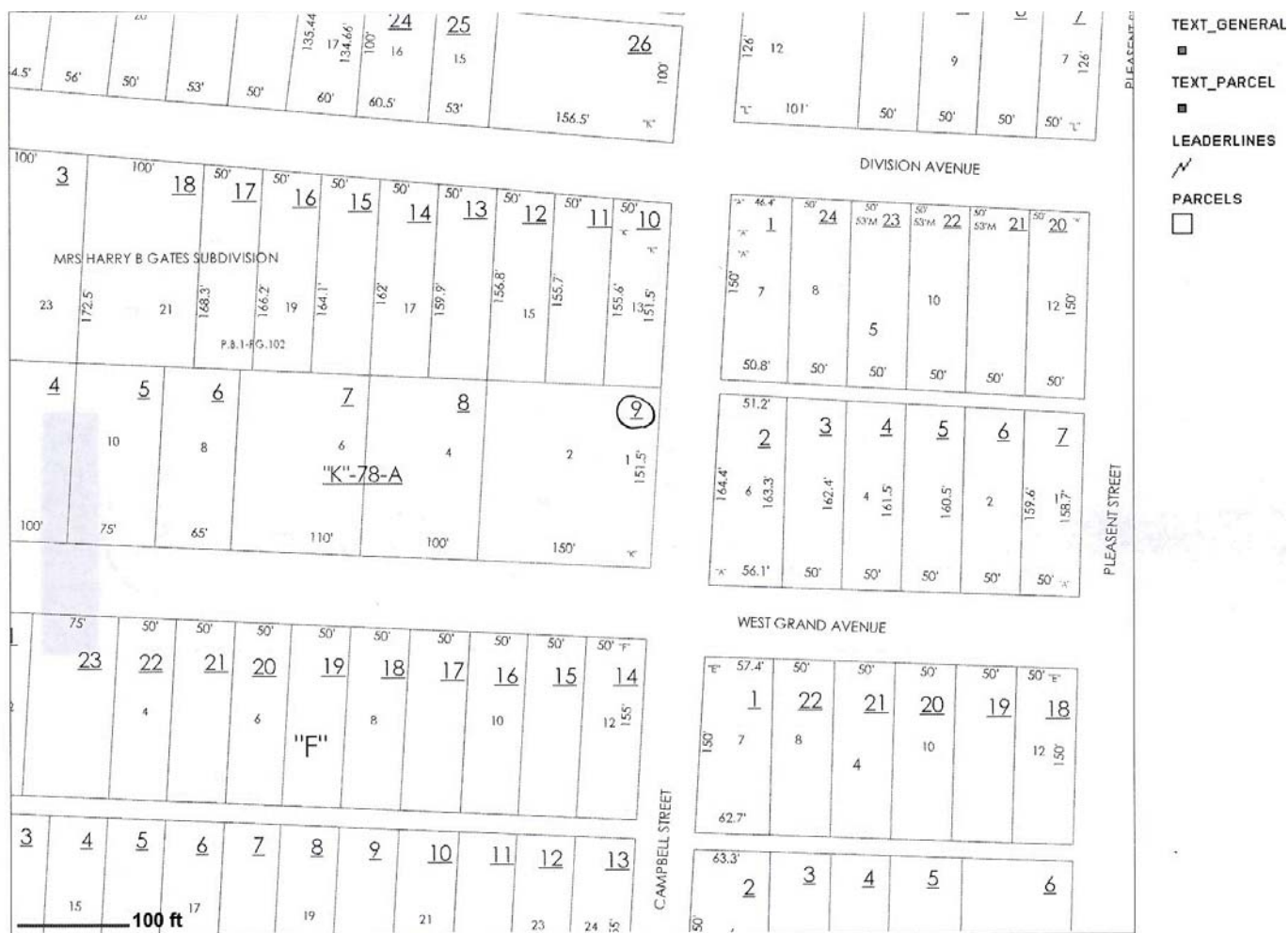
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 10 Page 13Temple B'Nai Israel
Madison County, Tennessee

Geographical Data

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property is parcel 9, map 78A, in the Mrs. Harry B. Gates Subdivision on the attached Madison County tax map. This includes all the land historically associated with the Temple B'Nai Israel.



MADISON COUNTY, TENNESSEE

DISCLAIMER: THIS MAP IS FOR PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENT PURPOSES ONLY. IT WAS CONSTRUCTED FROM PROPERTY INFORMATION RECORDED IN THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTER OF DEEDS, AND IS NOT CONCLUSIVE AS TO LOCATION OF PROPERTY OR LEGAL OWNERSHIP.



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number photos Page 14

Temple B'Nai Israel
Madison County, Tennessee

Photographs

B'Nai Israel Temple,
Jackson, Madison County, TN

Photographs by: Renee Tavares

Date: September 14, 2007

Digital negative: Tennessee Historical Commission

B'Nai Israel Temple, south façade, facing north
1 of 17

B'Nai Israel Temple, south facade, cornerstone, facing north
2 of 18

B'Nai Israel Temple, south facade, central arch showing Star of David, facing north
3 of 18

B'Nai Israel Temple, south façade and east elevation, facing northwest
4 of 18

B'Nai Israel Temple, north and east elevations, facing southwest
5 of 18

B'Nai Israel Temple, north elevation, detail, facing south
6 of 18

B'Nai Israel Temple, north and west elevations, facing southwest
7 of 18

B'Nai Israel Temple, west elevation, facing east
8 of 18

B'Nai Israel Temple, west wing, south elevation, top, facing north
9 of 18

B'Nai Israel Temple, Eternal Light, facing north
10 of 18

B'Nai Israel Temple, Bimah, inside main floor, facing north
11 of 18

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number photos Page 15 Temple B’Nai Israel
Madison County, Tennessee

B’Nai Israel Temple, Bimah, inside from choir loft, facing north
12 of 18

B’Nai Israel Temple, Ark, inside, facing north
13 of 18

B’Nai Israel Temple, Torah scrolls, inside Ark, facing north
14 of 18

B’Nai Israel Temple, southern west stained glass window, inside, facing west
15 of 18

B’Nai Israel Temple, second southern west stained glass window, inside, facing west
16 of 18

B’Nai Israel Temple, southern semi-circle stained glass window, inside from choir loft, facing south
17 of 18

B’Nai Israel Temple, Lectern, inside - basement, facing north
18 of 18